

**"K**INGS in the Making: the Princes of Wales," by E. Thornton Cook (Dutton, \$5). As in his previous books dealing with English and Scottish royalities in groups—such as kings, queens, Marys and Elizabeths—the author aims both to be terse and colorful. He succeeds in not dropping to the level of hack work, and packs incident and character quite dramatically in the few pages allotted to each Prince. There have been twenty holders of the title and twelve of them lived to be king. One is a bit surprised to learn that until the birth of the present Prince of Wales none has been born in England of English-born parents for four centuries. Our author is not afraid to point out princely faults—he deals faithfully with the contemptible roué who became George IV—but still it will pay the reader to re-peruse Thackeray's "Four Georges" to get a full view of that unhappy and mostly contemptible family. As is well known, the title Prince of Wales was the outcome of a trick played by Edward I on the Welsh rebel chiefs. They shouted with joy when he promised to give them a Prince born in Wales and unable to speak English. Then he presented his own new-born son. The Welsh took the joke. It is a long interval between that first Prince of Wales and the other who has lately been acclaimed Great Britain's courier of trade and good-will to South America. The old heroic, fighting days of the Black Prince and Harry of Agincourt are long past but they and some of their successors were fine and romantic figures of history.

R. D. TOWNSEND.

### Behind the Blurbs

**W**HEN, in *The Silver Scale Mystery*<sup>1</sup>, we read how Miss Gregor was inexplicably murdered in her locked bedroom in Duchlan Castle, and how her nephew's name was Eoghan, and how Eoghan's wife's name was Oonagh, we knew at once that there were going to be kelpies or wraiths or Highland horrors of some kind, and sure enough, there's a mysterious splash in the burn and a dreadful thing like a seal goes swimming out to sea. Detective Dundas comes, investigates, is bumped off, and succeeded by Inspector Barley, who is presently bumped off too, just after he has made out an ironclad case against the local physician. And then Dr. Hailey, who thank heaven was staying in the neighborhood, gets to work and provides us with an extremely ingenious explanation, and a weapon which we don't remember ever to have seen used before in a fiction murder. Very good,

<sup>1</sup> By Anthony Wynne: Lippincott, \$2.

this one. ❀❀❀ What does a nice girl do when, having accepted the invitation of a perfectly presentable French countess to visit at the Chateau des Bois Profonds, she finds herself a prisoner until she agrees to marry the countess' son? You can find out what Jennifer Talbot did under these circumstances if you read *Mouse Trap*<sup>2</sup>. She really had a pretty bad time, and the sinister Vicomte des Champs-nouveaux was trying to starve her into submission in a dungeon before her friend, Quentin, came to the rescue. A mildly exciting tale. ❀❀❀ Andreas Latzko, whose *Men in War* you may remember, has written, in *Seven Days*<sup>3</sup>, the story of Baron Mangien, wealthy manufacturer, who, caught in a compromising situation, is forced to change places for several days with Karl Abt, one of his workmen. Karl is killed by the husband of Mangien's mistress, and Mangien himself escapes at the expense of Landau, who has given up wealth to devote his life to the poor. Latzko has an axe to grind, but he does not grind it at the expense of the story, and he offers no sentimental solutions for the problem he states. But the book will make you think. ❀❀❀ An amusing small item from Random House is an old New Bedford whaling yarn, *Thar She Blows*<sup>4</sup>, which Mr. Paul Johnston, who has selected the version here printed, tells us in his foreword has been passed, by word of mouth, up and down the New England coast for almost a hundred years. It is a story of a certain first mate, Mr. Sims, who demanded only civility from his skipper. Mr. Johnston's illustrations are extremely lively and appropriate. ❀❀❀ When Danny McGlone came to New York to direct a series of radio programs, he ran into an epidemic of apparent suicides, and presently found that he was involved in an extremely clever scheme for the use of radio by gangsters. There's plenty of excitement in *The Broadcast Murders*<sup>5</sup>, and a great deal too much mystery. You don't know why A is shot, nor why B jumps out of the window, nor why C hands the jewels to D, and then there are E, F, G, H and a lot of others who are feverishly active and violent without any apparent motives. The author, Fred Smith, has adopted the Dashiell Hammett manner of telling his story, but he has by no means mastered the manner. Which is a pity, for he has a good story to tell. ❀❀❀ The August book of the Book League is John Fort's *God in the Straw Pen*.

WALTER R. BROOKS.

2. By M. N. A. Messer: Putnam, \$2.00.  
3. Viking, \$2.50.

4. \$1.00.  
5. Day, \$2.00.



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## Music

### Notable New Recordings

IT SEEMS about time to get around again to some of the so-called popular selections. I say so called because there was a press story the other day to the effect that Rudy Vallee had got one cent royalty for popularizing a song over the radio which had subsequently sold two copies. Be that as it may, you can imagine how chagrined I am to have to admit that Mr. Vallee has made by far the best version of *When Yuba Plays the Rumba on the Tuba*<sup>1</sup>. Can the grapefruit-throwing Harvard lads have been wrong after all? Why, Rudy is actually funny on purpose in this record! On the other side he is confidentially autobiographical, I presume, when he croons in more like his customary fashion *I'm Keepin' Company*, although he now unbends to the extent of dropping that "g" in the title. His band, too, has improved of late.

Another most danceable disk is Leo Reisman's *I Love Louisa* and *New Sun in the Sky*<sup>2</sup>, both from *The Band Wagon*, which are graced by vocal choruses by Fred Astaire himself, who, up to this point, has taken no part in the singing. The young man is all right.

Ted Lewis is back again with a typical *I'm All Dressed Up with a Broken Heart* and *I Love You in the Same Sweet Way*<sup>3</sup>. It's really remarkable how long Mr. Lewis has held on, continually keeping his orchestra up to date but keeping it obviously Ted Lewis.

The Cuban-Spanish flood continues practically unchecked, although it has come in for a bit of kidding, such as in the above-mentioned *Yuba* and *Fiesta*<sup>4</sup>, with which Ben Bernie and His Orchestra have a lot of fun. A remarkably good genuine Cuban record is Don Aspiazu and His Havana Casino Orchestra doing *Green Eyes* and *La Ruñidera*<sup>5</sup>, which Marion Sunshine has somewhat freely translated as *Wanna Lot o' Love*. The latter is particularly hot. To revert to Mr. Bernie, the *Fiesta* disk is worth having because of a gloriously nonsensical *The Alpine Milkman*, which is on the other side.

One of the best torch songs for a long while is *I'm Thru with Love*, as sung by Lee Morse, accompanied by Her Blue Grass Boys. She is not so intense, but equally effective on the reverse in *Let's Get Friendly*<sup>6</sup>. Her range is extraordinary.

O. C-T.

1. Victor 22742.
2. Victor 22755.
3. Columbia 2492-D.
4. Brunswick 6107.
5. Victor 22729.
6. Columbia 2474-D.

## From the Life

### Unknown

IT WAS a lost country. The world, as the world knew itself, was for a long time ignorant of its existence. And when at last the world discovered it, stumbling, it caught itself up for a moment only to exclaim and wonder. Then the world rushed on, remembering vaguely and forgetting in the end. The new discovered land stirred and turned and was all but lost again. But not quite. For once every day it was roused and stirred by the railroad. Westward one day, eastward the next, the train roared and flashed its long stretch through the prairies and was gone. But there had been a train. There was a whole world lying this way—another world that—and who could say what they were like.

*Did the light fall differently there? Did the people have a wiser look? Did music, intricate and many colored, burst from the steeples like jewels, to fall softly on flowers that sprang below? Were the streets really gay and smooth like ribbons, rolling—fluttering—*

*Or were those worlds like nothing ever seen. Moving water—as wild and deep, and high as prairie winds. Sand that was bright and living as gold, not white with death, like the sand of the desert. Worlds of ships that flew like magic palaces, upheld by oceans and rocked by air, grazing the moon at night and at dawn sailing straight into the sun?*

Some such wonder filled the little boy who ran each day from the streets of the flat village, and waited beside the track. There was always a moment when he was not quite sure—was it his heart, or the far-off beat and rumble of iron on steel? Then he could be certain—then the curl of smoke against a still sky—and gradually, from nowhere, a cry, faint and growing louder—louder, filling the sky, catching him up and drowning him in noise! The train was going by.

He shook and trembled with the grass. He lifted his arms above his head and waved them violently as windmills. His heart pounded in his throat like an eagle about to fly.

And then the train was gone. He walked through stillness towards his home, thinking about it. There had been faces at the windows; men, women and children all looking at something marvelous in the distance; all looking as though they were painted on the glass; always different. Only one was every day the same. That one dressed like a general and, looking like a king, stood between two cars upon the platform. He knew everything; he traveled over the whole world; he told every one what to

do. Each day, as the train rushed by, he flung his arm above his head, and looked straight at the boy. When he grew up, thought the boy, he would be like that, he would stand all day on a train and know what life—everywhere—was like.

Back and forth went the train, marking off the days. As far as the outside world was concerned it was no more than a small clock ticking away the time. So the inevitable moment arrived finally when a new conductor was to take charge, for the old conductor had died.

"There's a strange duty for you, in this connection," the new conductor was told by an embarrassed official. "A sort of—sort of dying request for that matter, made by the former conductor on the line."

"That so?" asked the new conductor.

"Well, you see it was this way," went on the official, frowning hard in his effort to make something clear. "There was a small boy lived along the route. A long time ago. Used to go and stand 'longside the tracks and wave at the conductor. Never missed a day for that matter. Not so long as he lived, he didn't. Then the kid died. Well—you can see how it was. The conductor sort of used to count on it, watching for the kid to wave and all. Like a bit of life to him. So you can see how it was. When the kid didn't show up he had to find out why. Then it seems the kid had died, and so they buried him 'longside the track. And once a week, see, the old fellow used to stop the train and put flowers there and just sort of see that everything was right. So that's what it's all about. He said when he was dying would the train please keep on stopping and see that everything was right. Flowers, maybe. And so on."

The new conductor stared dumbfounded. "Why, sure," he said. "Why, sure. But where's the kid's folks?"

"Well, of course that's part of it. His folks moved off, a good while back."

The new conductor nodded. "And what'd you say his name was? The boy's name?"

"That's sort of funny too," said the official. "Nobody knows his name. A long time ago—and nobody just seems to remember. But there's his grave all right. Close to the tracks."

On his first week out the new conductor stopped the train beside a handful of all but forgotten earth and left some flowers. He may have felt it was a tribute to those who had traveled farther than he, and knew more about some other world—some other kind of life—than he did.

IBBY HALL.